

BUSH 635: MINI-CAPSTONE

2017 Alumni Survey

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I. Introduction

This mini-capstone assignment was designed to be a continuation of the 2010 Capstone supervised by Dr. Eric Lindquist. Our main objective was to readminister the survey designed by this 2010 Capstone with minor adjustments. The initial survey was distributed to 208 Bush School alumni with 61 alumni responding. The alumni email list for that survey was curated by the Director of Student Services. Our survey sought to maintain the same general structure of the initial survey. Questions were divided into the following broad categories:

- Demographic Information
- Employment Information
- Bush School Curriculum
- Internship Program
- Faculty
- Program Services and Activities
- Career Outcomes
- Knowledge and Skills

Additionally, our survey provided opportunity for open ended response questions at the end of each section and the opportunity for open-ended responses at the end of the survey.

Our survey was modified from the initial capstone project by incorporating their recommendations, particularly in regards to improved demographic results. For instance, our survey included the following questions:

- Are you an international student?
- What was your undergraduate major?
- Did you participate in the five-year dual degree program?
- Which state did you complete your undergraduate degree in?
- What state do you currently reside in?

Our survey also added information about employment sector and delineated contract workers into different governmental levels and private industry.

We sent our updated survey to 530 Bush School alums from an email list also maintained by Career Services. 245 individuals started the survey and 240 completed it. This is a 46.2% response rate with a completion rate of 98%. The raw data, survey questions and codebook are all available for future use.

A literature review and focus groups, as suggested by the initial capstone, were out of the scope of our mini-capstone. The results below and our findings are derived exclusively from the survey issued.

II. Methodology

The design of this survey was taken largely from the initial capstone group from 2010. We added questions identified by the first capstone that would have been helpful, largely in regards to additional demographic information from the respondents. Furthermore, we sought to improve the utility and flow of the survey by consulting with Dr. Blease Graham, Dr. Joanna Lahey, Dr. Jeryl Mumpower and Mr. Morten Wendelbo. The survey was created using Qualtrics and took respondents an estimated 20 minutes. Survey questions were largely asked using a 5 point Likert scale with the following options for respondents:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The survey also auto-skipped sections for respondents that were not relevant to them. This occurred in two instances in the survey. It did not collect employment information from unemployed respondents neither did it collect internship opinions if the respondent had not participated in an internship.

The survey was distributed via email to 530 Bush School Alumni using a list maintained by Dr. Upton in the Career Services Department. Of these 530, we had 245 start the survey with 240 completing the survey. One follow-up reminder email was sent to individuals who had not started or completed the survey a week prior to closing the survey. The survey was open from March 10th to April 1st. All data analysis and summary statistics of the responses were conducted using STATA and Qualtrics.

III. Results

A. Demographics

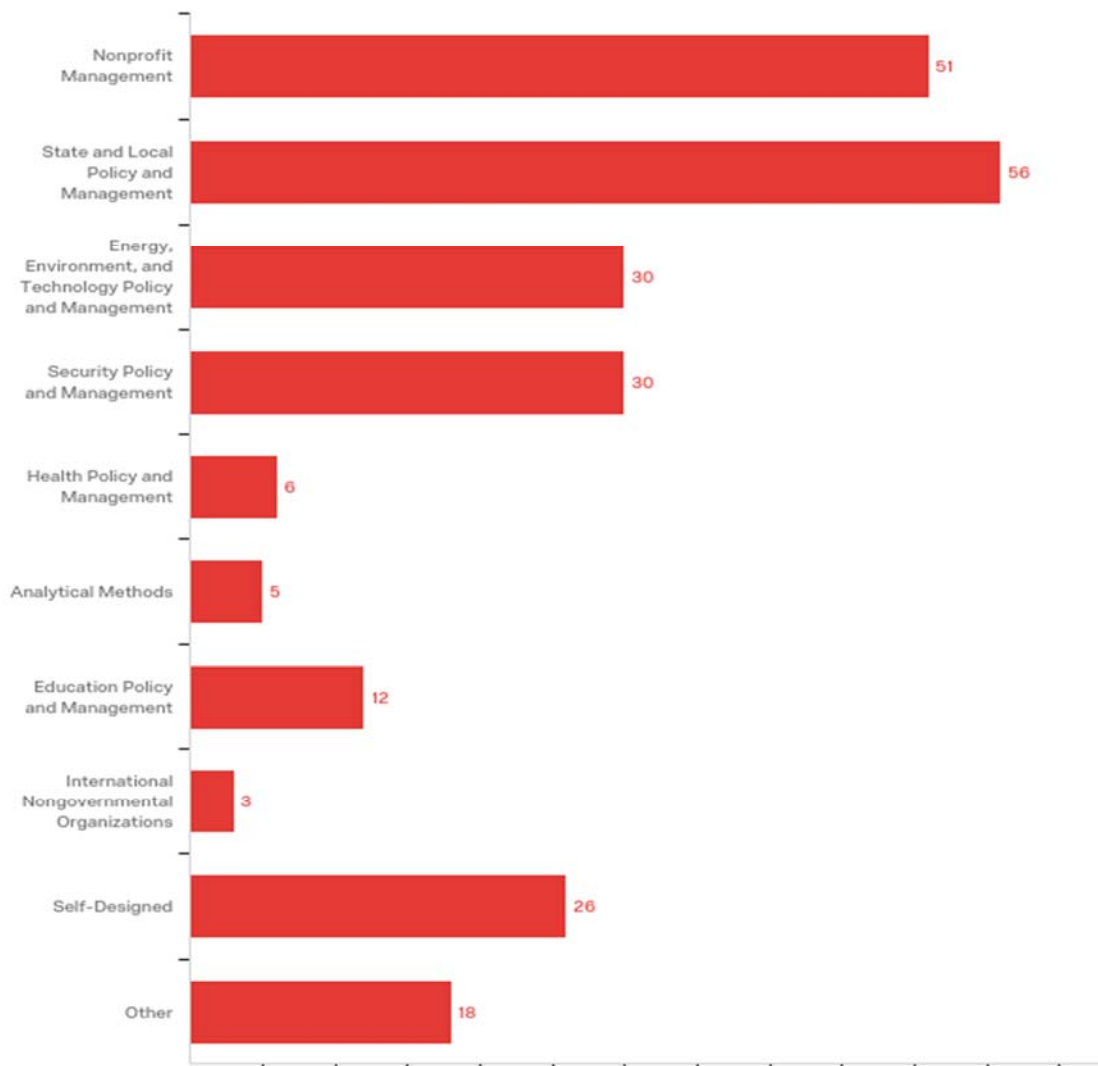
In comparison to the previous research, our high response and completion rates with 240 completed surveys hopefully provides a more demographically representative sample of Bush School alumni. The respondents were approximately 53% female and 47% male. This result is similar to the 2016 student demographics of 49% male, 51% female. The respondents ranged in age from 22 to 62, with a median age of 31. About 9% of respondents completed the five-year dual degree through the Bush School. The earliest graduating class represented in survey responses was the class of 1999, and the class of 2016 had the highest number of respondents.

International students accounted for about 9% of responses, slightly lower than the 13% international students reported in the 2016 Bush School demographics. 77% of respondents

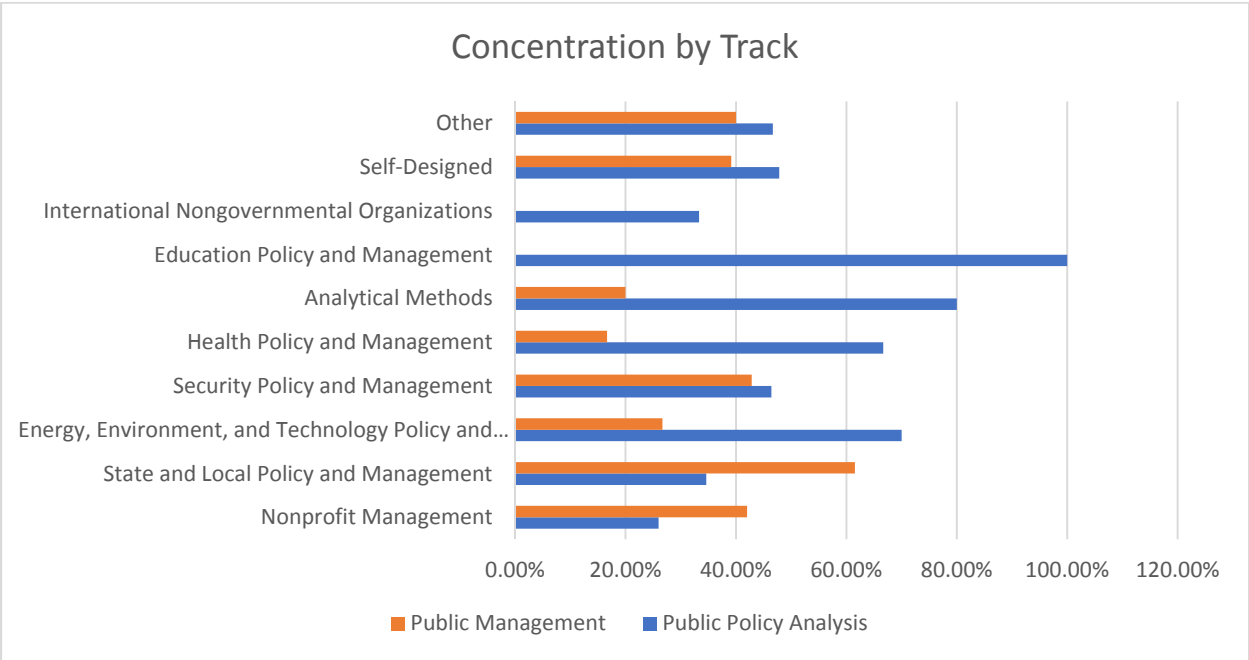
identified as White Non-Hispanic, 5% as African American, 7% as Asian, and 7% as Hispanic. One respondent identified as American Indian and six identified as Other.

The existing MPSA tracks at the Bush School of Public Policy Analysis, Public Management, and Nonprofit Management were the most frequently represented at 44%, 39%, and 18%, respectively. Fewer than 3% of respondents were on each of the following tracks: Advanced Public Management, Business and Government, Environmental and Natural Resources, Health Policy and Management, and International Affairs in the Americas. 8 respondents (less than 5%) classified their tracks as Other. This is illustrated in the graph below.

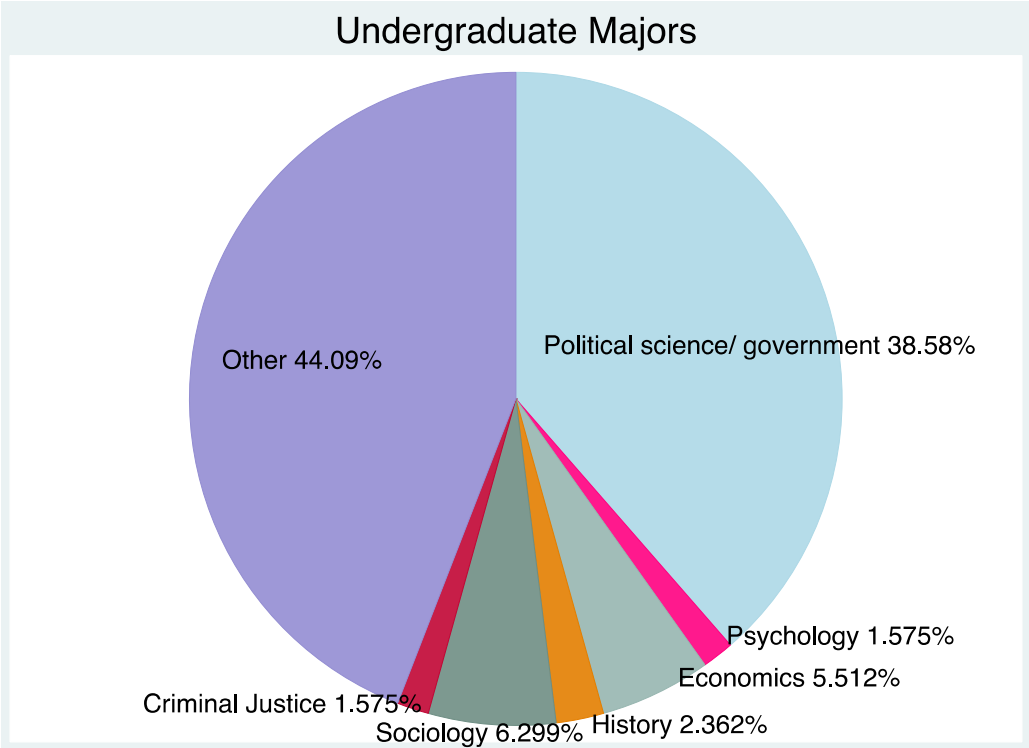
Q1.9 - What was your concentration while you were in the MPSA program?:



When comparing concentrations between the two main tracks (policy analysis and management), it is noticeable that only respondents in the policy analysis track chose either the international nongovernmental organizations or education policy concentrations.



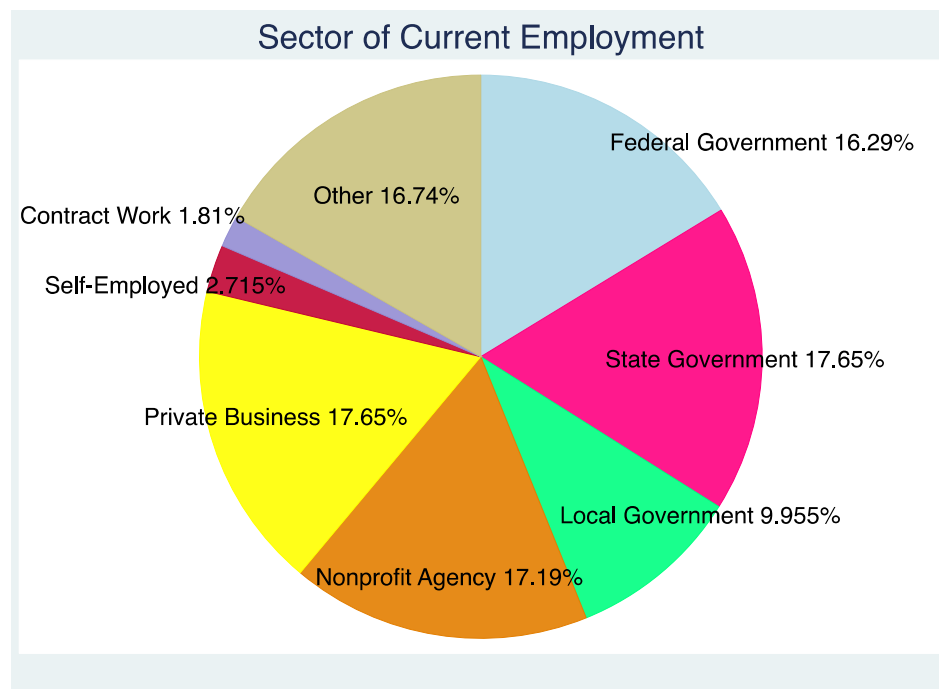
66% of survey respondents had an undergraduate major in Political Science/Government, Psychology, Economics, History, Sociology, or Criminal Justice. 44% of respondents listed another major, which included a myriad of other academic areas.



92% of respondents are employed either full-time or part-time, and only 3 of the 240 respondents reported being unemployed. 6% are full-time students and are not currently in the workforce. 82% of responding graduates believe they are in a position that relates to their MPSA degree and 30 (14%) say they are not in such a position.

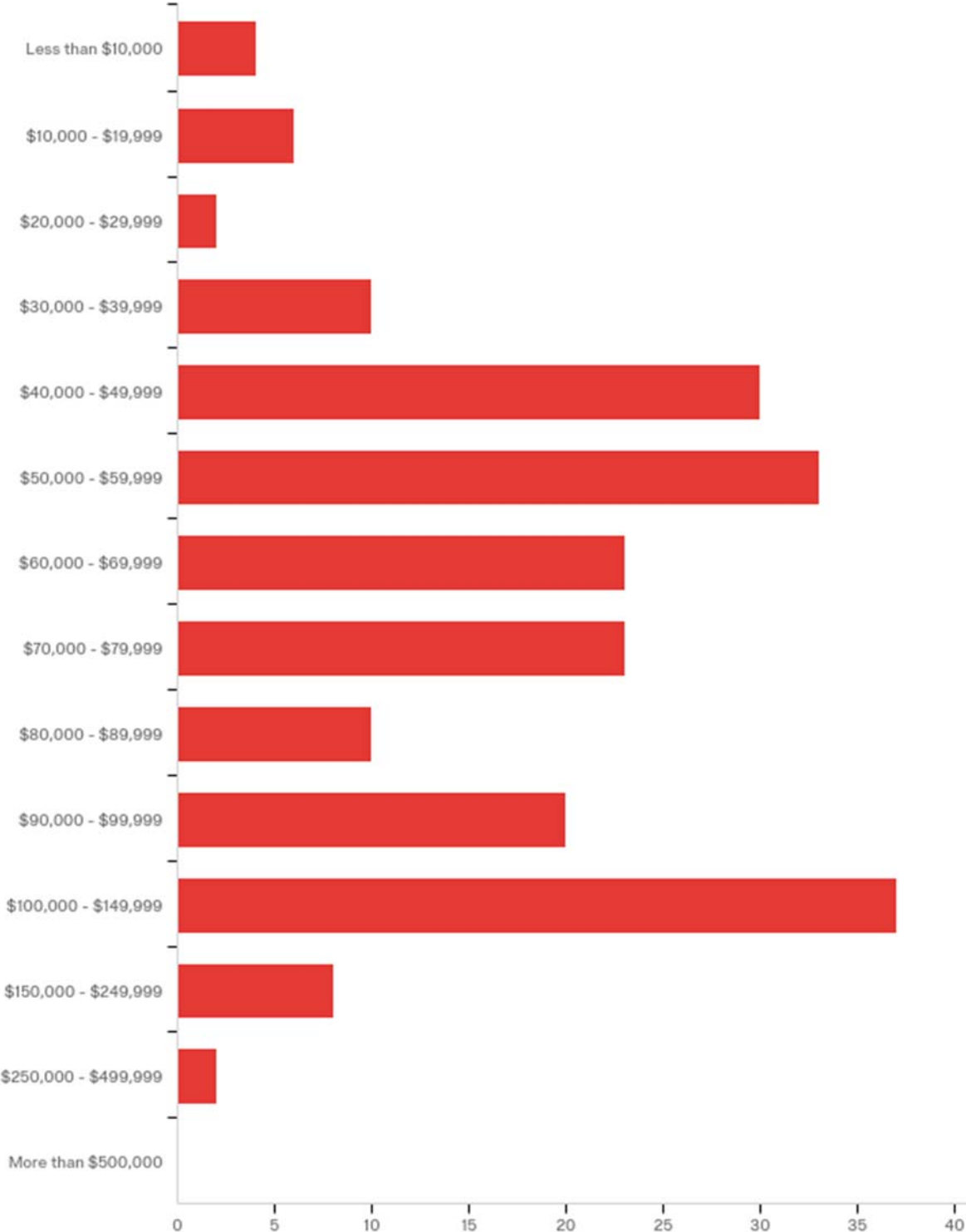
The following graph illustrates the breakdown of employment by sector. The most common field of employment for graduates was in the government, with 43.9% of respondents reporting employment at either the federal, state, or local level. Within government, state level employment was most common with 17.7% of respondents, then federal with 16.3%, and finally local with 10.0%. 17.7% of respondents reported employment in the private sector and 17.2% were in the nonprofit sector. 16.7% of respondents selected other as their sector of employment and within this category, the majority reported either being a full-time student or working in education.

Q2.3 - Please select the appropriate sector of your current employment



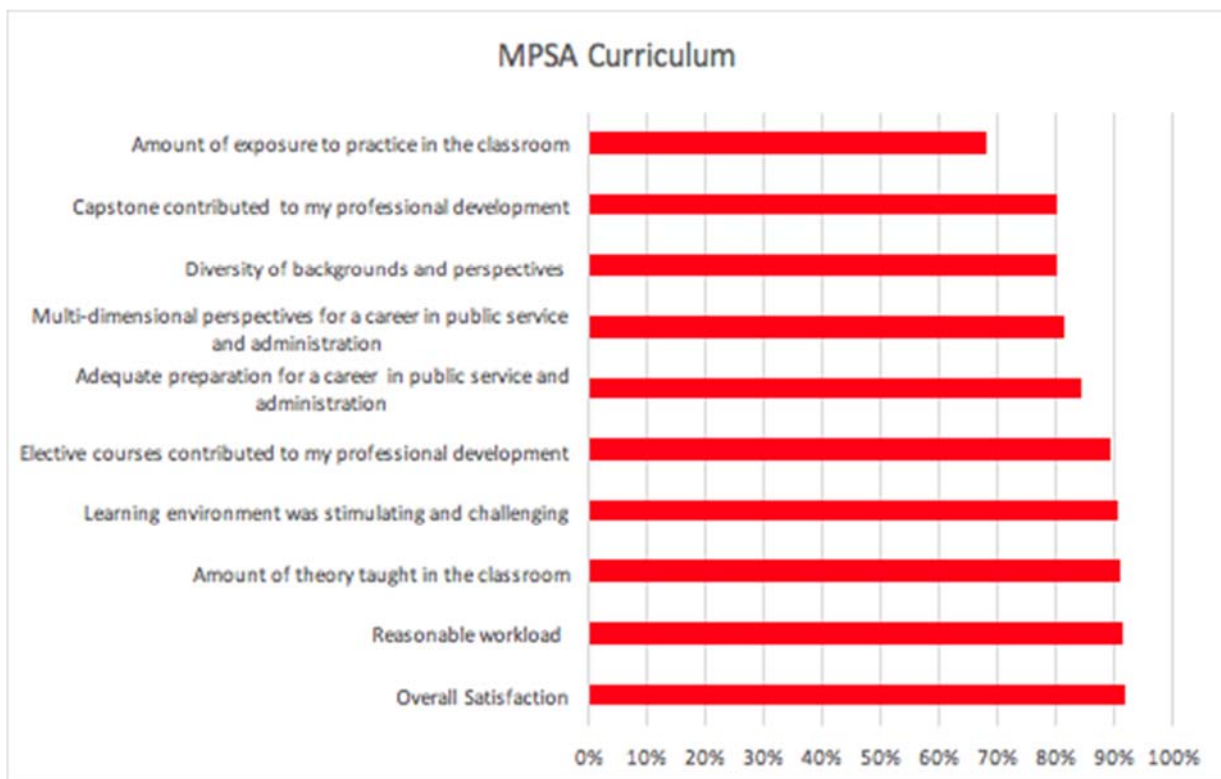
On the following page is a graph that shows the salary range of respondents. The median respondent fell into the \$60,000 to \$69,999 salary range. The most common response was \$100,000 to \$149,999 with 37 respondents of the 208 who answered this question falling into this category. The next most common range was \$50,000 to \$59,999 with 33 respondents falling into this category. Using the midpoints of the ranges to find a n average, the mean salary for respondents was \$79,903.85 with a standard deviation of 49,451.

Q2.9 - Please select the salary range for your present job:



B. Curriculum

Overall, respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the MPSA curriculum. Over 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the program curriculum overall. All questions in this category received significantly over half positive responses, as illustrated in the graph below which shows the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements. After overall satisfaction, respondents gave the most positive reviews to the workload of the program (with 91% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it was reasonable). Similar to the previous administration of this survey question, the least positive response was for there being an appropriate amount of exposure to practice in the curriculum. Still, even in this category 67.9% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that it was appropriate.



Several comments stood out as illustrative of the quantitative results or particularly illuminating.

“I particularly appreciated classes that incorporated practical assignments - that could potentially mirror something we would have to complete in a work/professional setting” – 2016 MPSA Graduate

“There weren't a lot of offerings at the time but I thoroughly enjoyed my curriculum. The class that provided the most hands on practice was Performance Management. I wish the State & Local Management track had done the same considering the numerous available opportunities

to connect with state & local policymakers due just to proximity to State Capitol.” – 2010 MSPA Graduate

“After working in the public sector for two years, right after graduation, I feel like there can never be enough practice! My capstone experience was extremely beneficial to my work after grad school for those two years and I cannot say the same about all the theory taught in the classroom.” – 2013 MSPA Graduate

“I was very happy with the education I received. I believe we could have had more quantitative practice as my job requires it. One semester of Quant was required for my track. Program Evaluation was useful but it could have had more quantitative aspects.”- 2013 MSPA Graduate

“Re-brand the curriculum and, certainly, the degree to a “Masters in Public Administration”, so as to align with competitor programs. The market seems to have little appreciation for a “Masters in Public Service & Administration.” I strongly agree that public service is a noble calling -- hence the reason I've dedicated a decade of life and work to public service -- but asking graduates to market themselves with a non-aligned credential puts them at an unnecessary disadvantage.” – 2007 MSPA Graduate

When comparing the answers of more recent graduates of the program to previous graduates, it can be noted that there are not significant changes in responses over time. Here we are defining recent graduates as those who graduated in 2011 or later, so they may have benefited from changes resulting from the previous survey. There are no statistically significant differences between the two groups in their responses to any of the curriculum survey questions when comparing using a two-tailed t-test. This indicates that the survey appears to show steady, positive views of the curriculum over time.

C. Internship

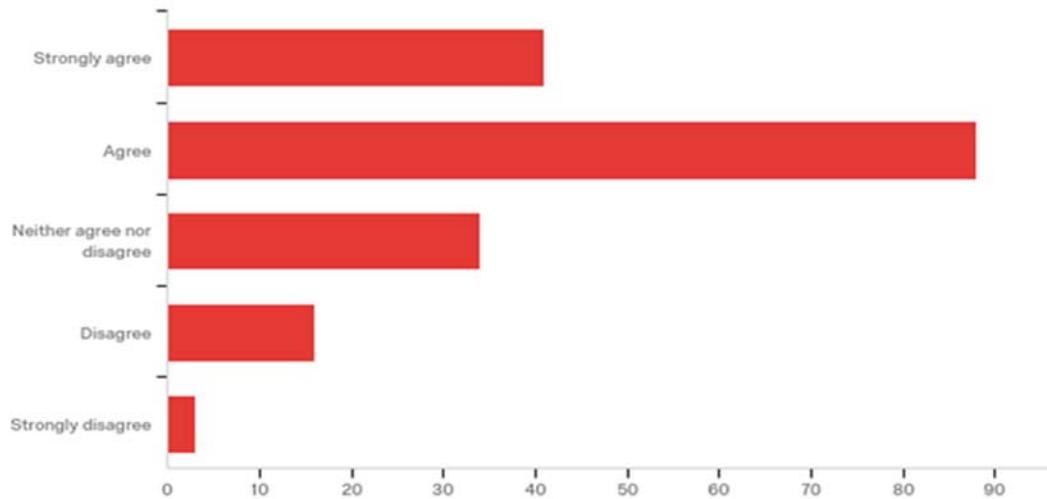
One of the main sections of the survey focused on the internship experience, a crucial piece of the Bush School MSPA program. Of those surveyed, 85.2% had participated in the internship program (Q4.1). Only internship participants were asked the remaining questions regarding their internship experience. These questions addressed the quality of the program, if it complemented the academic experiences, its practicality, its usefulness in professional development, and its connection to later employment. These questions elicited positive responses from alumni on the whole. The results of the survey questions on internship were not statistically different for recent graduates (defined again as those who graduated in 2011 or later) than for earlier graduates as determined by a two-tailed t-test for each survey question.

Comments on the experience were also positive on the whole, with one student saying “the internship process is one of the best aspects of the MSPA program, please keep it alive!” However, several students expressed a desire for increased support from the Bush School in finding an internship. In fact, a majority of comments on the internship section either addressed

the idea that they did not receive support in finding an internship or offered suggestions for how the Bush School could better maintain contacts and help students finding internships. Given the positive benefits of the internship program, these comments stand out as a way to improve it even further.

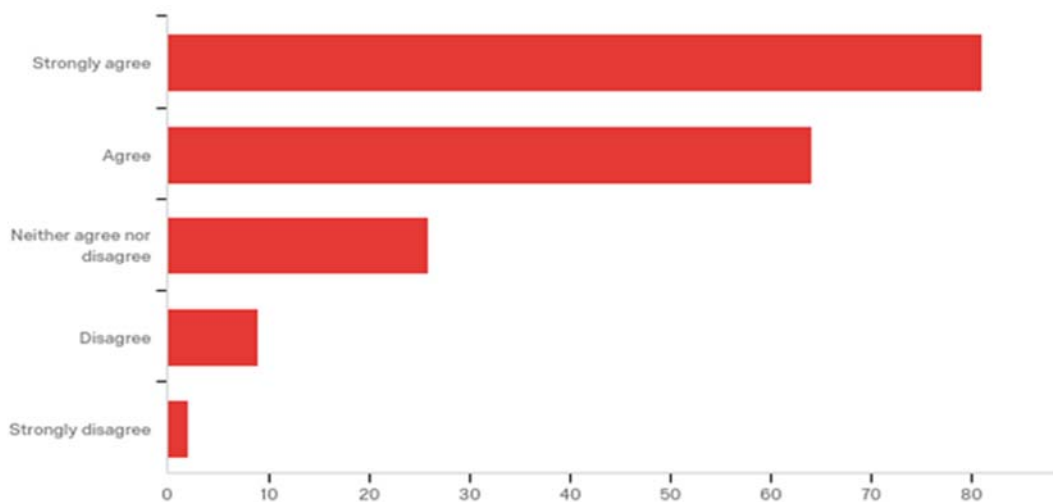
Q4.2 - My first year in the MPSA program prepared me for my internship.

Over 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the first year of the MPSA program prepared them for their internship. Another 19% neither agreed nor disagrees, while about 10%, or 19 respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This shows that on the whole, students felt that the program was relevant to internship experiences and provided enough preparation.



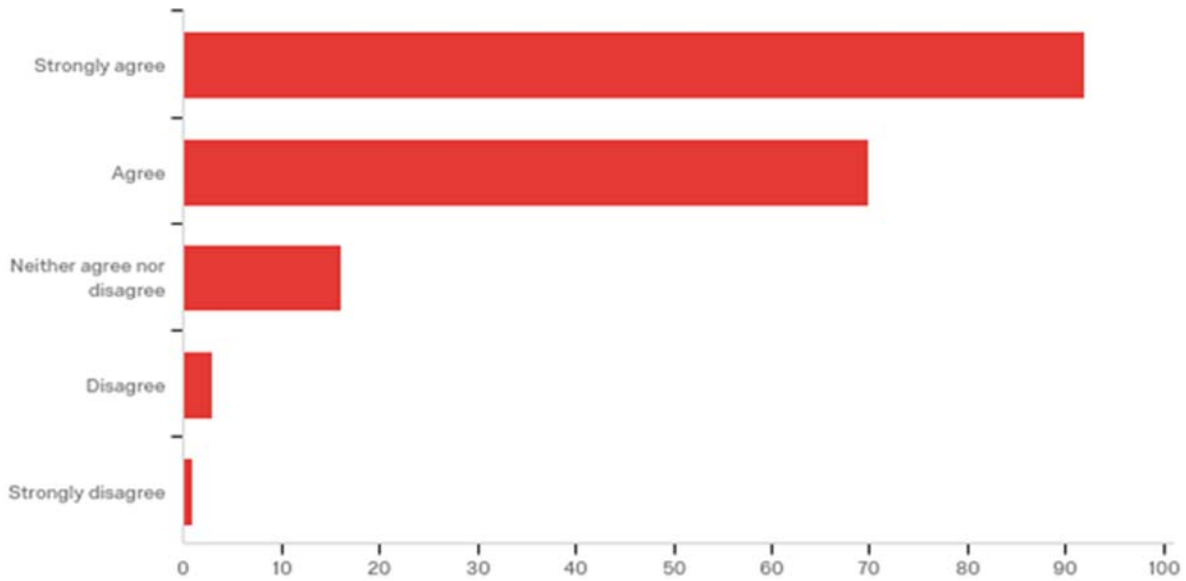
Q4.3 - My internship complemented my academic learning experience.

80% of respondents felt the internship program complemented the academic experience. This is a positive result, showing that courses and the internship experience melded together appropriately.



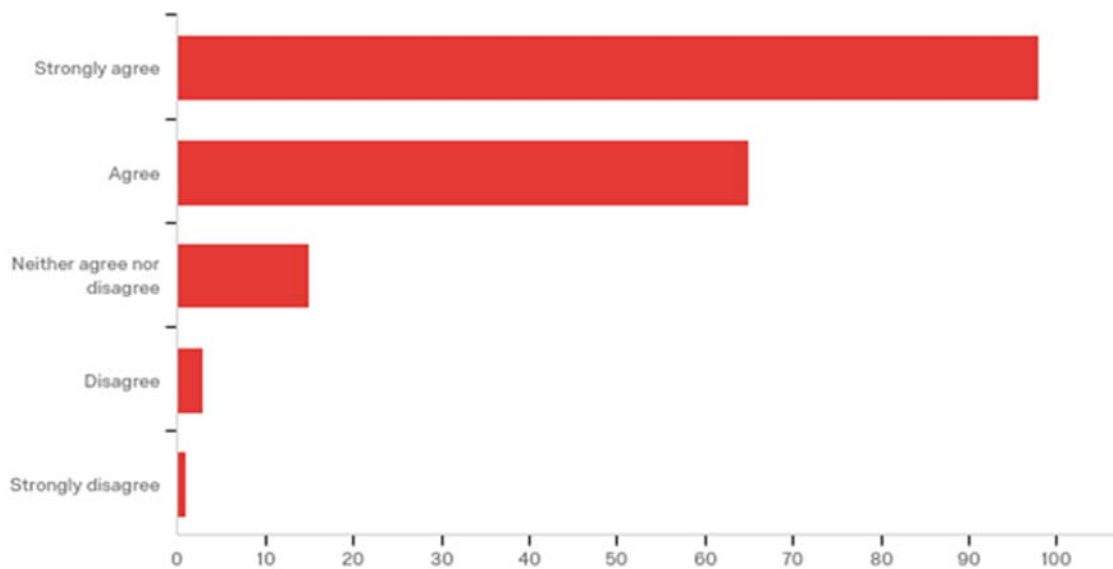
Q4.4 - My internship allowed me to gain practical, “hands-on” work experience.

89% of respondents answered positively to the statement that internships helped them gain practical experience. This outcome bolsters the idea that the internship is a valuable and necessary part of the MPSA program.



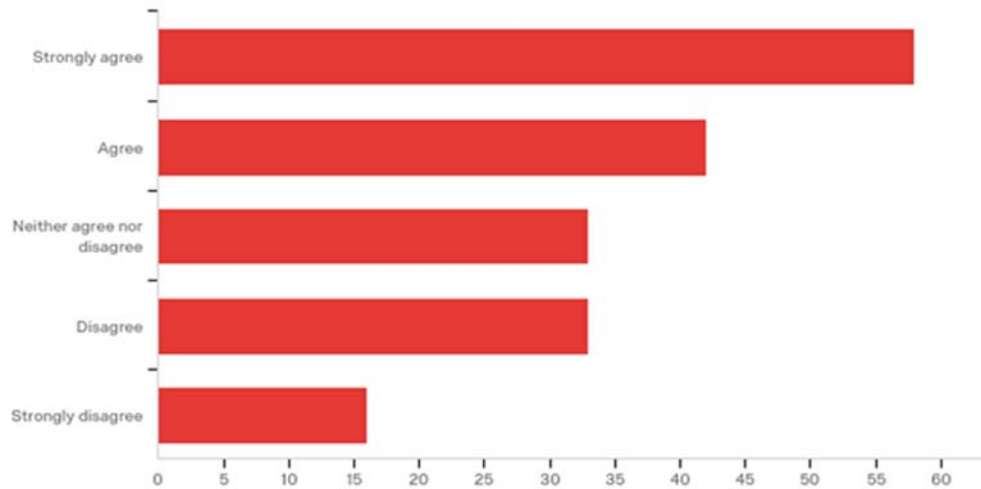
Q4.5 - My internship was a valuable addition to my professional education and provided insights (either positive or negative) into the kind of career experiences I wanted after graduation.

90% of respondents agreed that the internship was a valuable addition professionally and it provided insights into their career. Again, this is a strong result showing the usefulness of the program. Only 1 respondent strongly disagreed with this statement.



Q4.6 - My internship directly helped me gain employment after graduation.

32% of respondents strongly agreed that their internship directly assisted them in gaining employment post-graduation and another 23% agreed. Given the specificity of this question, that is a surprisingly high affirmative rate. This shows the internship program can be a useful pipeline for many students to find employment post-graduation. As one student commented, “My internship was the sole reason I got my job.” This shows the internship can provide valuable opportunities for students later on.

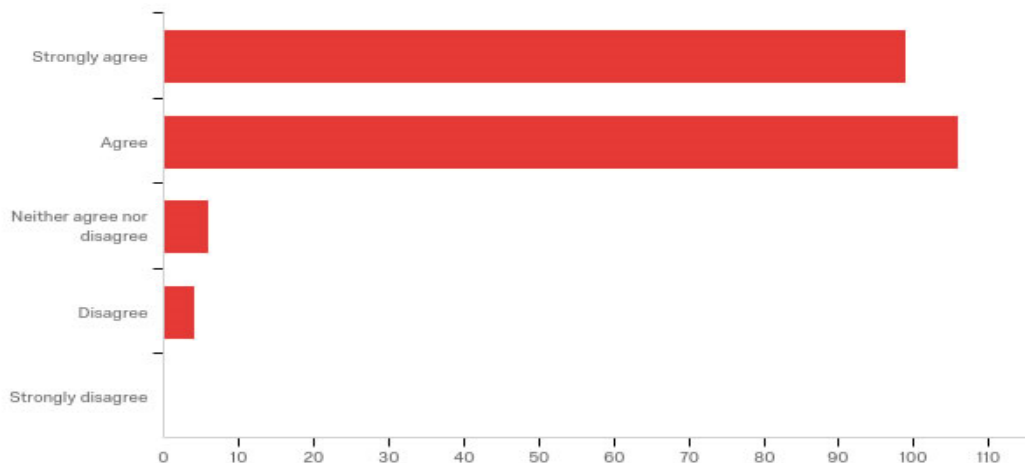


D. Faculty

Respondents were asked 5 questions in regard to the faculty in the Bush School MPSA program. Each question had a majority of positive responses. This shows that most alumni were satisfied with the quality of instruction, diversity of background, accessibility and meaningful counseling of the faculty.

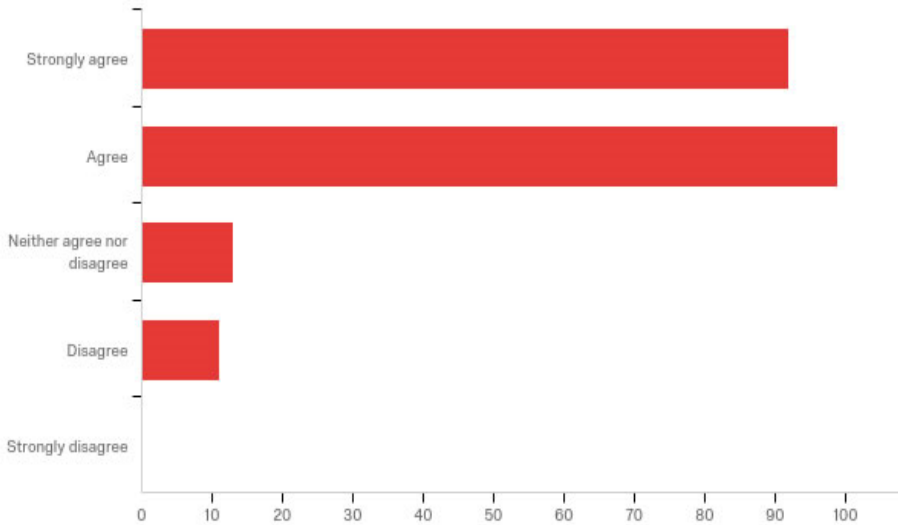
Q5.1 - I was satisfied with the quality of instruction in the MPSA program.

As the graph below shows, over 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of instruction in the MPSA program.



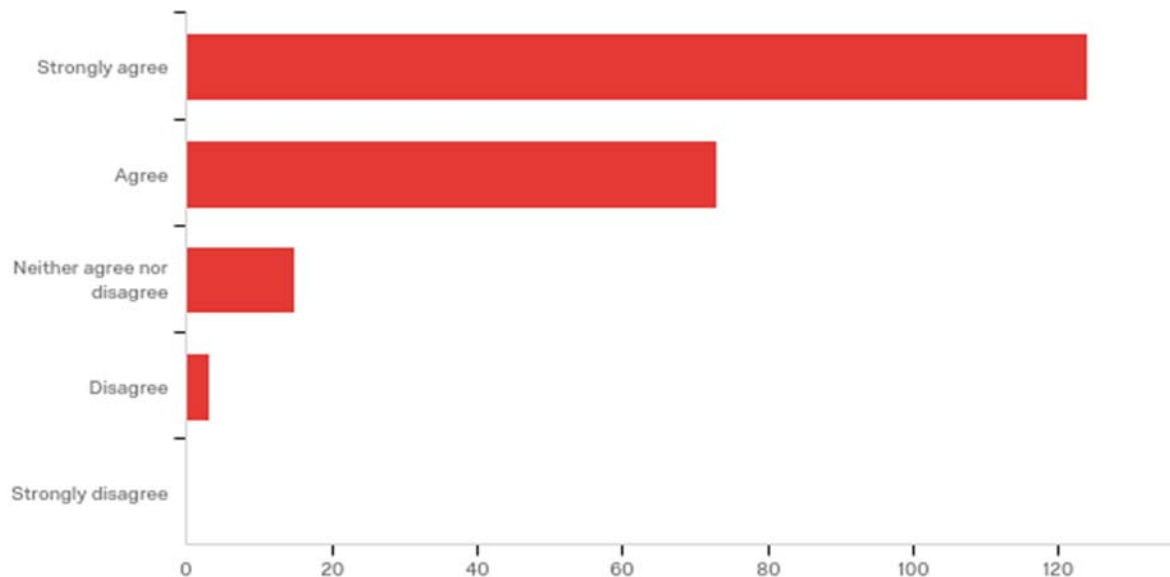
Q5.2 - The instructors brought a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives to the classroom.

As shown in the graph below, the results of Q5.2 were similar to Q5.1, though there were a smaller share that agreed and strongly agreed at 88.84%



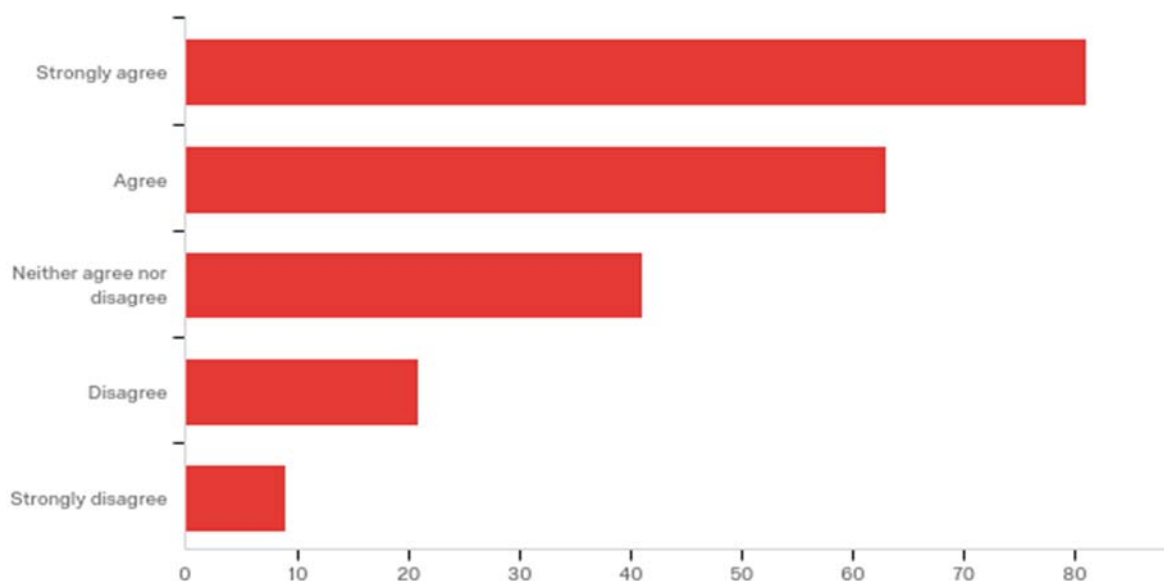
Q5.3 - Faculty members in the MPSA program were accessible and constructive when I sought to interact with them

Responses were very positive on the accessibility of faculty with a majority of respondents strongly agreeing. 91.62% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the faculty members were accessible.



Q5.4 - My faculty adviser counseled me in a meaningful way pertaining to academic matters and my professional preparation at the Bush School.

66.97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to this statement. Although a majority, this was a much smaller majority than previous questions about faculty. This indicates that faculty advising may be an area for improvement in the Bush School. One student commented that students should be able to pick their advisers during or after the first semester. Given that students are already able to change advisers, students may need to be made more aware of this policy. Future surveys could ask alumni if they needed or requested faculty counseling, and if they did whether it was meaningful or not.



Here are some of the useful and interesting comments that were made about faculty:

“The faculty are what make the School so great! Please keep the open doors and the blend of practitioners and academics. That is HUGELY important. I also had a fine relationship with my adviser, but she was not helpful to me in my field. She helped me and gave me input when needed, but also gave me a lot of freedom to seek input / help from faculty more in-tune with my career goals. I think there should be an initial adviser POC, but then there should be a way to maybe select your permanent adviser after your first semester in.” – 2014 MSPA Graduate

“I greatly appreciate the balance of practitioners and academics serving as faculty.” – 2013 MSPA Graduate

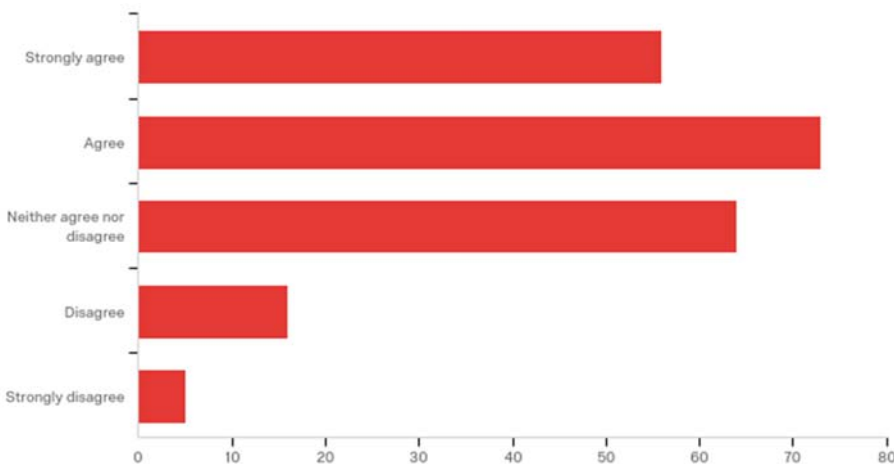
“Bring in more professors with “real world”, non-academic backgrounds only. Bring in more adjunct professors who are not just career academics.” – 2011 MSPA Graduate

E. Program Services and Activities

Section 6 of the survey inquired about the program services provided by the Bush School. Six questions were asked using the Likert scale, as well as an opportunity for open ended responses. This section had 214 responses for the 6 opinion questions and 46 individuals who contributed open ended responses. Under the Program Services and Activities sections, the survey inquired about extracurricular activities at the Bush School (Question 6.1), the Bush School Facilities (Question 6.2), Leadership and Development Programs (Question 6.3), Career Services (Question 6.4), Workshops/Brown Bags (Question 6.5) and lastly overall opinion on the Bush School staff (Question 6.6). Overall, Career Services garnered the most negative responses, and the Bush School facilities scored the highest. Below is the breakdown of responses by individual questions.

Question 6.1 - The Bush School's extracurricular activities (Public Service Organization, Student Government Association, Ambassadors, intramurals, etc.) contributed positively to my experience in the MPSA program.

This question garnered largely positive responses from individuals, with over 60% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Under 10% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the above statement. The chart below shows the full distribution of responses.



Some comments relevant to extracurricular activities include:

“Although the idea and mission of the ambassadors is positive, the selection process, especially the first year was surrounded by drama and seen nepotism.” – 2015 MSPA Graduate

“Courses, brown bag lunches were always education, serving as an Ambassador taught me networking skills and the importance of good contacts.” – 2014 MSPA Graduate

“I discovered my career during a brown bag, so naturally I would say they were beneficial. The capstone was very beneficial in that I learned leadership and interpersonal skills. I was able to create my own course on city management where I went through ICMA case studies which was quite valuable.” – 2013 MPSA Graduate

“I helped create the PSO and SGA so I'm glad they are still active parts of the school. I valued our shared offices which helped build cohesion among our class.” – 2000 MPSA Graduate

Question 6.2 - The MPSA program’s facilities were conducive to my learning.

While only 8 respondents disagreed with the statement above, the below regression shows that more recent graduates were more likely to find the facilities unsatisfactory. This was done by creating a binary variable for responses that had a negative view of the facilities. While the impact of graduation year had a slight impact (.5%) on likelihood of having a negative view of the facilities, it did prove to be statistically significant at a 5% level. Full regression results are below.

Negative View of Bush School Facilities	Coef.	Robust Standard Error	t-score	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Graduation Year	0.0059796	0.0023717	2.52	0.012	0.0013044	0.0106547
Constant	-11.98589	4.757895	-2.52	0.013	21.36473	-2.607045

Comments regarding the Bush School facilities:

“Would loved to have had more study spaces/areas during my time! But I know this is being worked on/expanded currently.” – 2016 MPSA Graduate

“I know the corridors were tight when I was a student so I can only imagine now that student space is at a premium, if it exists at all. Having office space with other students greatly contributed to my development at the Bush School.” – 2013 MPSA Graduate

“Facilities could have been improved by expanding space for studying and group projects.” – 2016 MPSA Graduate

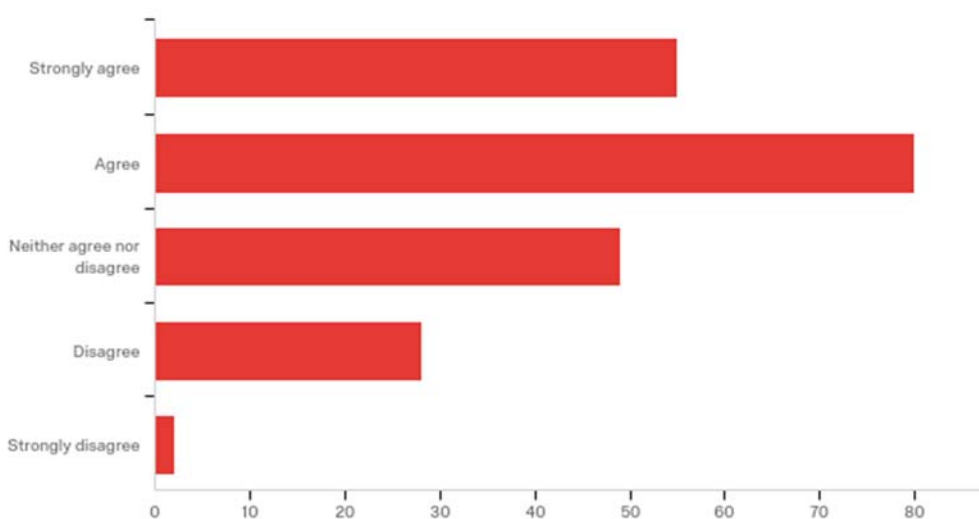
“Facilities: There was a shortage of study/work areas in the building at the time. The programs were growing but space was not. When areas were full during the day, we had to compete with politically science and economics students for other corners of space. I did like that we could access the building in off hours and on weekends.” – 2014 MPSA Graduate

“The space we had to study and work in was cramped and not adequate for the number of students enrolled. One of the best experiences at the Bush School was getting to know my

colleagues on both professional and personal levels. Since there was little to no space to study/be together at the Bush School proper, it forced students to be somewhere other than the Bush School.” – 2015 MPSA Graduate

Question 6.3 - The professional leadership and development activities (Public Service Leadership Program and Writing Center) provided me with useful knowledge, insights, and opportunities to practice valuable skills.

This question received more negative responses than some of the other questions within this section, nearing 14% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. However, feedback was still largely positive, with 55 and 80 respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing, respectively. These positive responses amounted to over 60% of the responses.



Comments regarding the professional leadership and development activities:

“Love the writing center! Mrs. Sally was the best, and I am ever-grateful for her!” – 2008 MPSA Graduate

“Professional leadership and development activities: Of the services I was aware of at the time, I participated in leadership development activities with Holly. She’s amazing and one of my favorite staff members” – 2014 MPSA Graduate

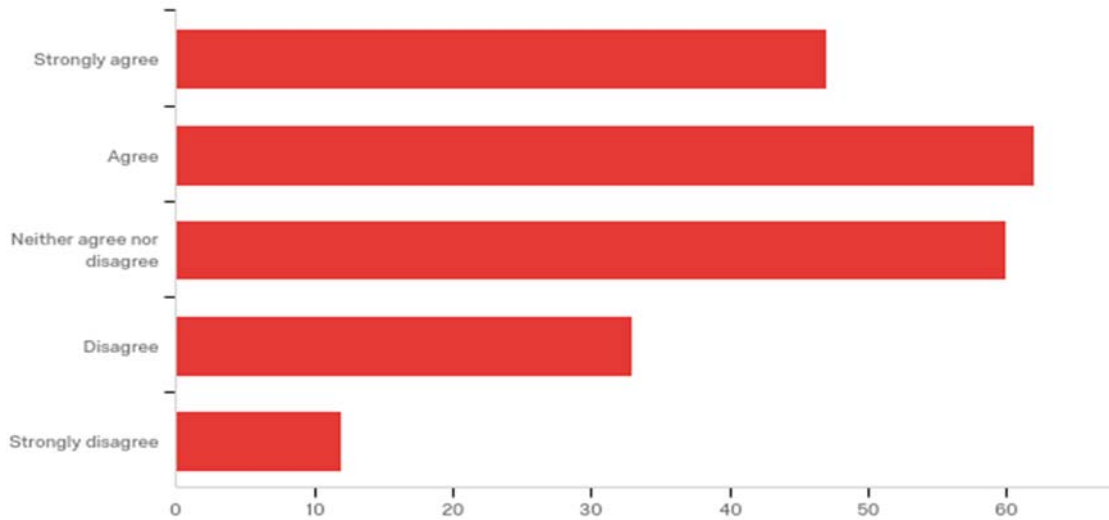
“I found value in the leadership program but not necessarily in the writing program as it was constructed at the time” – 2016 MPSA Graduate

“Writing support is priceless. This is a core service for students. Thank you!” – 2013 MPSA Graduate

“Writing in a business setting needs to be stressed much more. I remember only one instance of being taught business style writing and it focused on memos which no business does anymore. They should workshops on writing emails and presenting since those are actual useful skills to have.” – 2012 MPSA Graduate

Question 6.4 - Career services (including workshops and meetings with career services staff) at the Bush School provided useful assistance in my efforts to secure my internship and my job following graduation.

Career services received the most negative responses from Bush School alumni, with over 20% of respondents either strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the above statement. Additionally, the bar chart shows the total distribution of responses by type of all respondents. The question still received a majority of positive responses with 50.9% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that career services provided useful assistance.



Importantly, there appears to be improvement in the view of career services over time. This is shown in the below regression, which compares the results of the career services survey question on the 1 to 5 Likert scale (with 1 being strongly agree) to graduation year. As graduation year increases by one, the overall score on the question decreases by 0.05, indicating more agreement.

VARIABLES	(1) careerservices
gradyear	-0.0447** (0.0172)
Constant	92.51*** (34.62)
Observations	214
R-squared	0.031

Robust standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Comments regarding career services:

"In my experience career services never 'nailed it' for non-traditional students (those with more experience than the norm, or Gavin [sic] taken career breaks, etc). And support for international students - or those who were not US citizens was - was distinctly lacking. I'm surprised there isn't more of an effort to reach out and connect current students with alumni - we are an Aggie family, after all." – 2013 MPSA Graduate

"Career services wasn't helpful at all in job search and still aren't as I've reached out after graduation. The job market just sucks but they could definitely do more and do better to help people find jobs. This is my biggest area of concern for the GBS by far. What's the point of school if you can't get a job? More resources and talented staff need to be focused on this." – 2012 MPSA Graduate

"I believe one-on-one sessions with students would enhance job searching opportunities a year before graduation and I highly recommend this type of interactions along with follow up meetings and networking activities." – 2007 MPSA Graduate

"I cannot say enough good things about career services!" – 2016 MPSA Graduate

"Career services: Helpful with resume writing, did not contribute to helping me secure my internship and jobs. I think they were helpful for people looking to work in DC or Austin, but not so helpful if you were interested in going anywhere else." – 2014 MPSA Graduate

"The workshops provided by Career Services were extremely helpful!" – 2016 MPSA Graduate

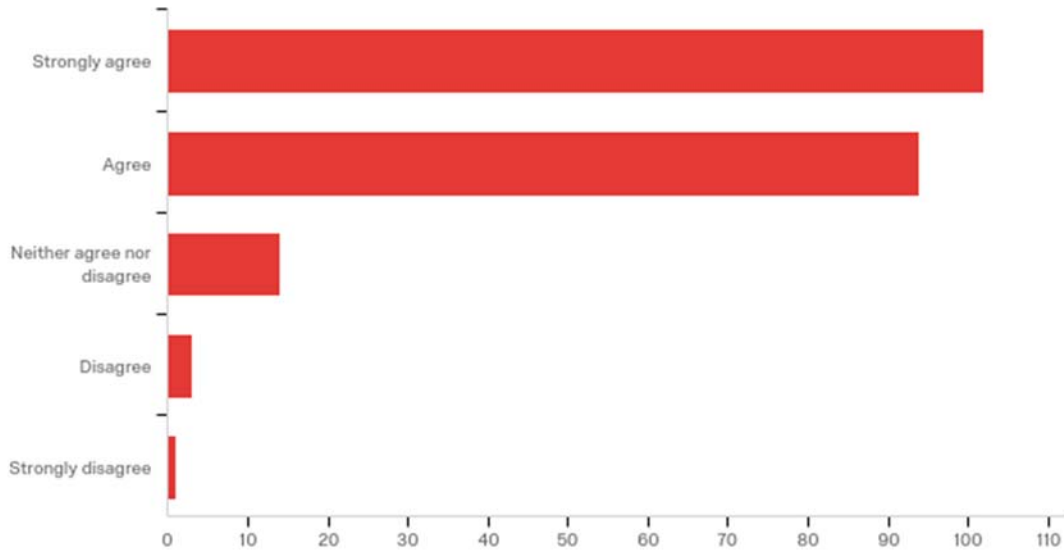
"Need more outreach with former students in Austin."- 2010 MPSA Graduate

"Career services was a tremendous help. Events with outside speakers particularly those from the Bush Administration were memorable but helped give perspective of the potential we had for future opportunities." – 2010 MPSA Graduate

"I was helped very little, if at all, by career services. The information shared was of the same caliber that one can find online." – 2010 MPSA Graduate

Question 6.5 - Workshops, brown bags, and speakers at the Bush School contributed positively to my experience in the MPSA program.

This statement received the most positive responses of the questions pertaining to a specific part of the Bush School Program Services and Activities, with over 91% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Only 4 respondents in total either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the above statement.



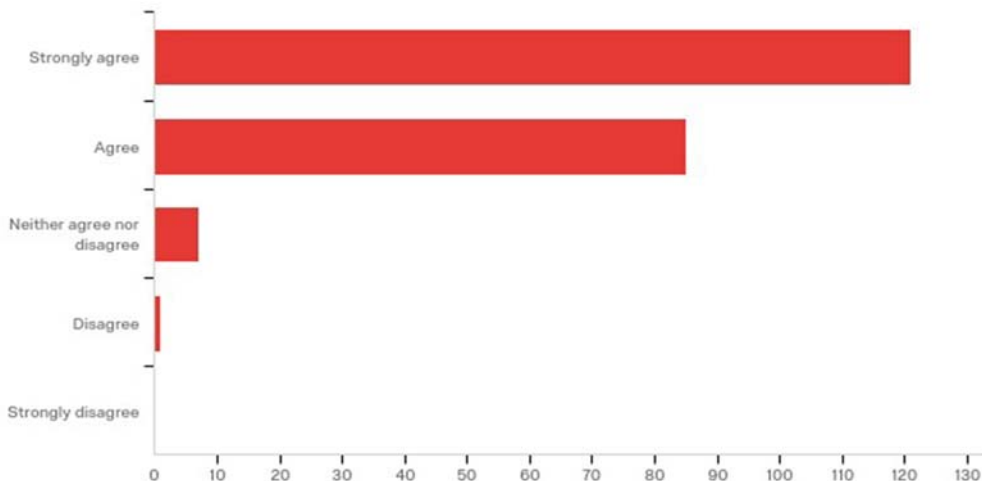
Comments regarding workshops, brown bags, and speakers:

“My favorite experiences at the Bush School were the speakers and the opportunity to interact with world leaders and influencers.” – 2006 MPSA Graduate

“Brown bag discussions and speakers program were fantastic when I was at the Bush School.” - 2003 MPSA Graduate

Q6.6 - Overall, MPSA program staff members were helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable.

The program staff members of the Bush School largely received positive reviews as well, with 96.26% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the above statement. Only 1 single respondent disagreed with the above statement, and very few (7 responses) were even neutral. It seems that largely, throughout the Bush School’s existence, its alumni positively view the program staff.



Comments regarding program staff:

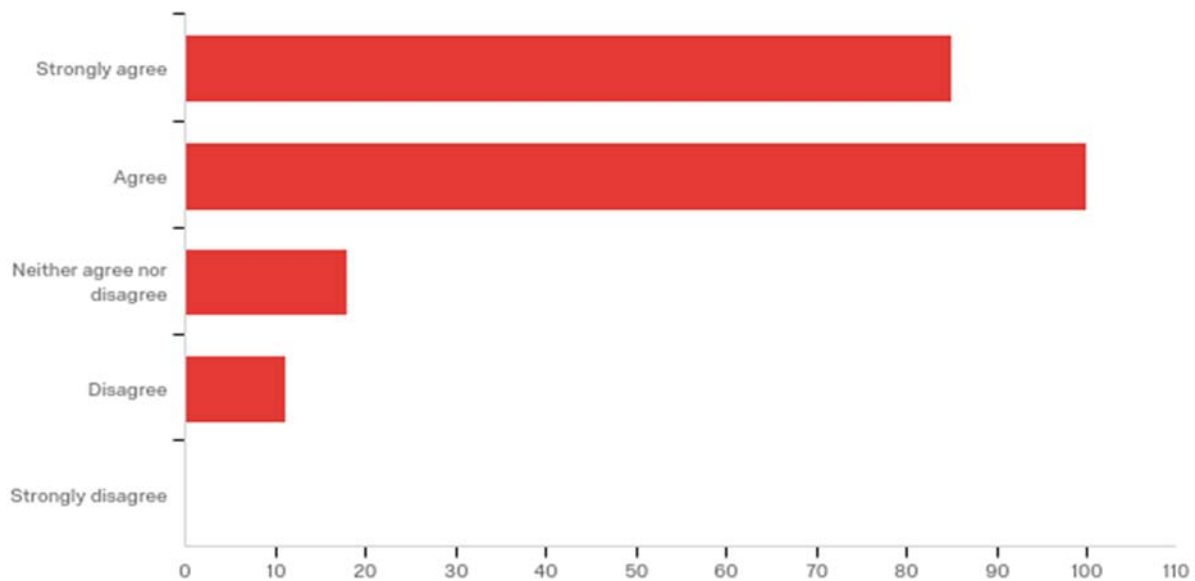
“Very supportive. TAMU/Bush School provide [sic] excellent career services and extracurriculars..” – 2012 MPSA Graduate

F. Career Outcomes

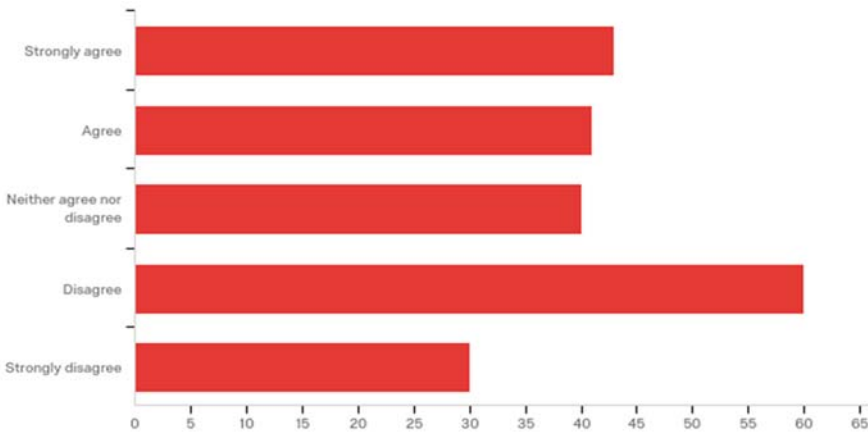
The survey asked respondents to gauge their satisfaction with the Bush School as it related to their preparedness for a career in public service and administration on a Likert scale. 87% of respondents either agreed with or strongly agreed that the Bush School provided them with knowledge, skills, and abilities that are directly applicable to their careers.

Roughly 39% agreed that their MPSA (or a Master’s degree) is required for their current position. 90% agreed or strongly agreed in feeling that the Bush School had prepared them for a career in public service and administration.

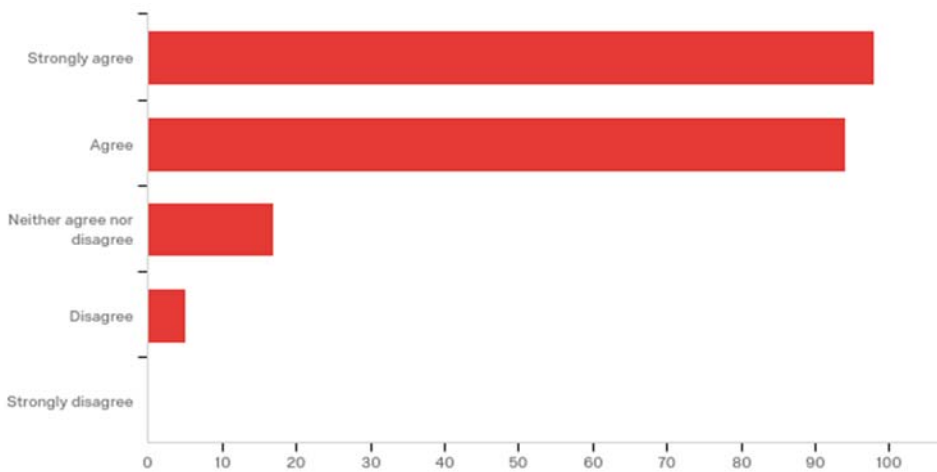
Q7.1 - The MPSA curriculum provided me with knowledge, skills, and abilities that I directly apply to my career.



Q7.2: The MPSA degree or a master's degree is required for my current position.



Q7.3: Overall, I feel the Bush School prepared me well for a career in public service and administration.



Comments regarding career outcomes:

“Overall attending the Bush School has been of great benefit and immense help in my chosen profession and hopefully in my subsequent career.” – 2012 MPSA Graduate

“As a public works engineer, (it seems odd to say but) there's not a day that goes by when I don't use the skills I acquired from the MPSA program.” – 2014 MPSA Graduate

“Whether a graduate goes into the public sector or private, politics and decision making and analyzing situations are innate to all employment opportunities. I think the culture, inclusiveness, and quality of the Bush School is excellent and taught me a lot about myself at that time in my life. It clearly was not going to be a fit for me to work in the public sector, and without the MPSA

program, I'm not sure I would have realized that and pursued work and classes in analysis, leadership, program management, etc. which helped me get to where I am today.” – 2010 MPSA Graduate

“In every position I have held post graduation I've had colleagues comment on my professionalism/leadership, writing ability and verbal communication skills. I attribute all my abilities and polished communication skills to the practical and academic lessons learned at the Bush School. The Bush School truly prepared me for advanced leadership positions and it really shows on a daily basis. I'm the most junior/youngest director where I work and I have very senior level officials seeking my leadership and communication ability. I attribute it all to the Bush School's preparation for the working professional world.” – 2007 MPSA Graduate

“While the Bush School is still relatively young, so to speak, one of the difficulties after attending is that it's not well known, and between the name and location a lot of assumptions are then made. The choice to title the degree "MPSA" also causes a lot of difficulties for those of us who focused on public policy, because that's nowhere in the name. People make a lot of assumptions based on what the administration degree is at other schools, and it puts you at a distinct disadvantage when you're trying to get into policy and analysis-based work.” – 2011 MPSA Graduate

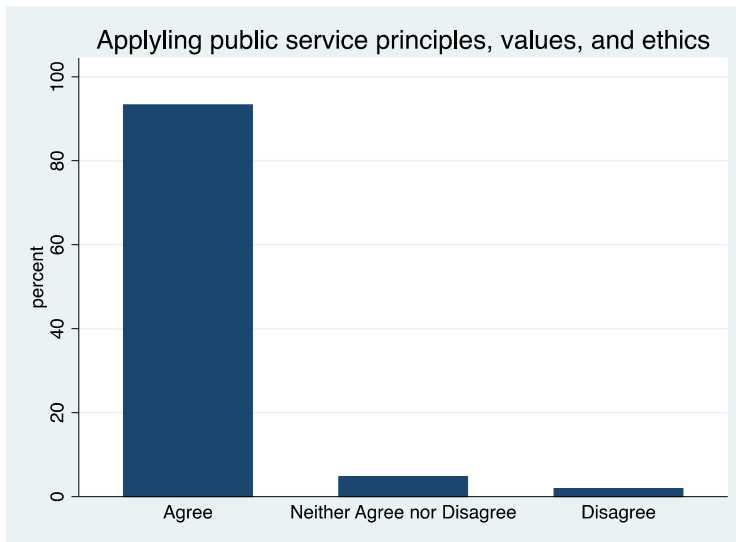
“I've been unemployed 3 times since graduating. I've found it hard to get ahead in the DFW local government sector.” – 2008 MPSA Graduate

“My interaction with my classmates both in and out of the classroom was the most rewarding thing I gained at the Bush School. While the coursework was interesting, it was neither challenging nor difficult. I would have appreciated a more scholarly program. I cannot complain about the outcome. My MPSA has allowed me to pursue a number of professional positions.” – 2000 MPSA Graduate

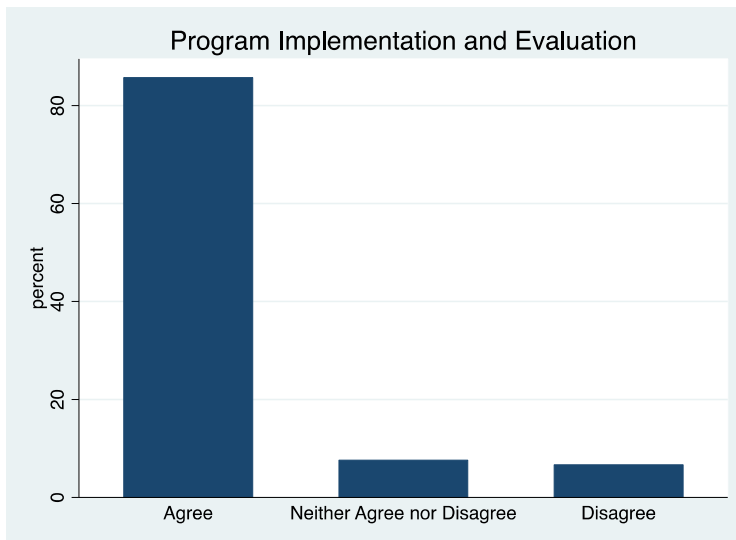
G. Knowledge & Skills

In this section, respondents were asked if the MPSA program contributed to their knowledge and skills in a variety of areas. Respondents felt strongest that the MPSA program had contributed in their knowledge of applying public service principles, values, and ethics, and program implementation and evaluation. When asked about specific skills gained through the MPSA program, respondents answered that the program contributed the most to their decision making, problem solving, applied research, and written communication skills.

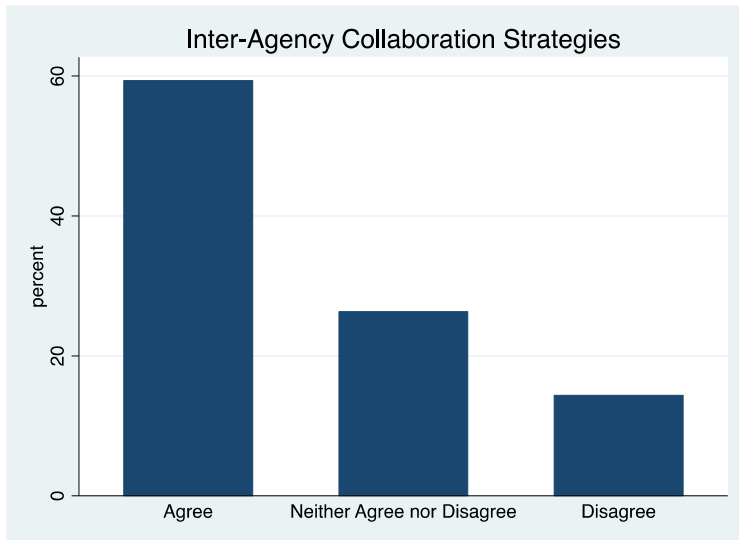
Q8.1 - The MPSA Program contributed to my KNOWLEDGE in the following areas:



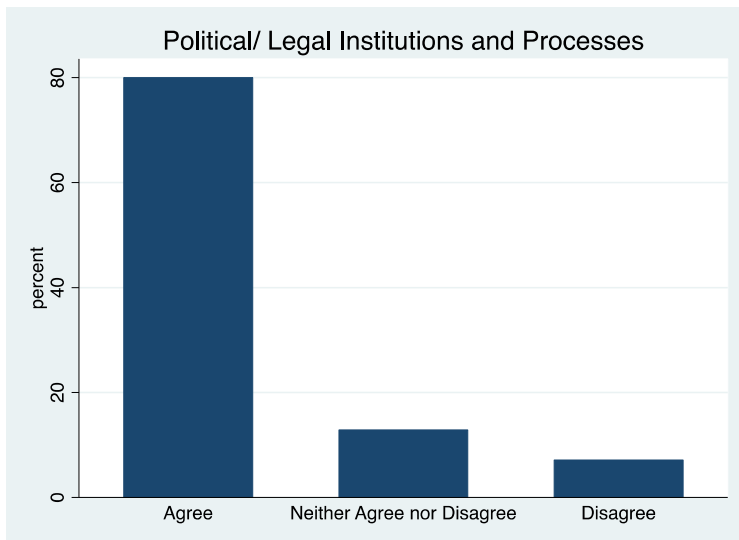
93.3% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their knowledge in applying public service principles, values, and ethics. Of all knowledge areas, this one received the most positive responses indicating it is a program strength.



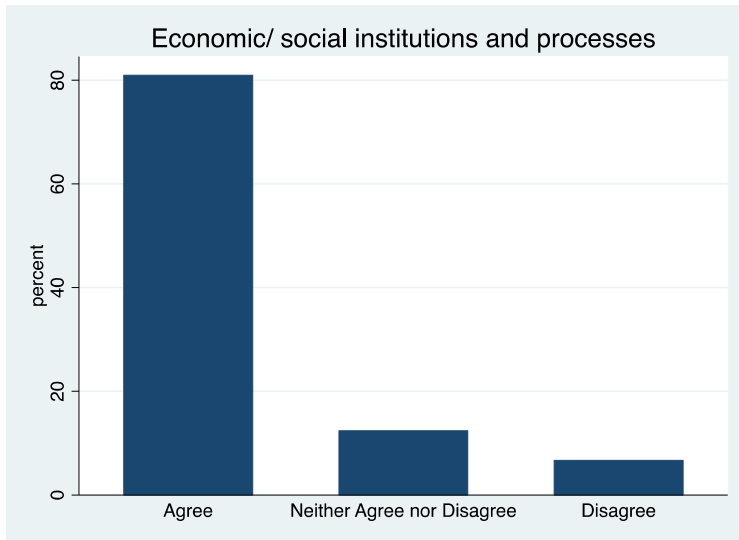
85.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their knowledge of program implementation and evaluation. This knowledge area received the second most agreement within this section, indicating many alumni see this as a positive of the program.



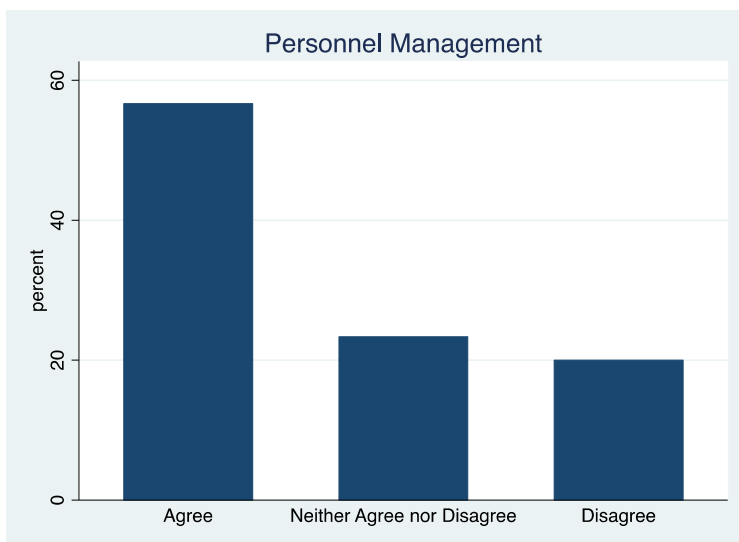
54.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their knowledge of inter-agency collaboration strategies. This area received less positive responses than all but one other knowledge area, indicating it may be an area for improvement. Still, the majority of respondents had a positive response to this question.



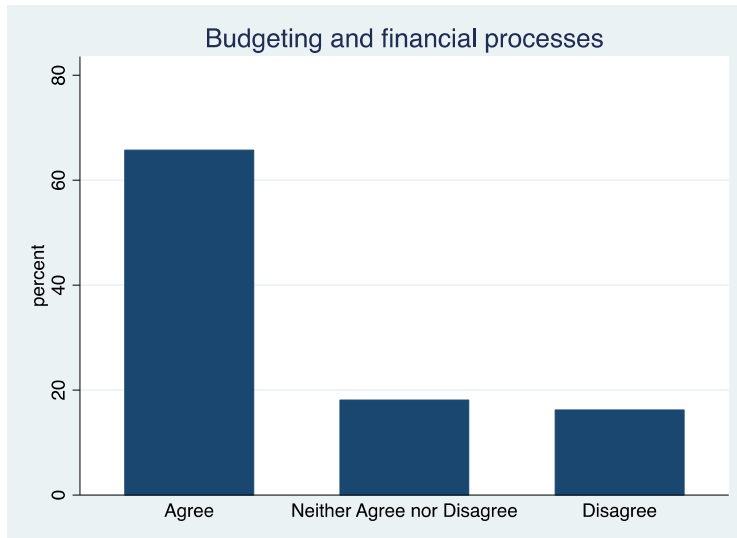
80.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their knowledge of political/legal institutions and processes.



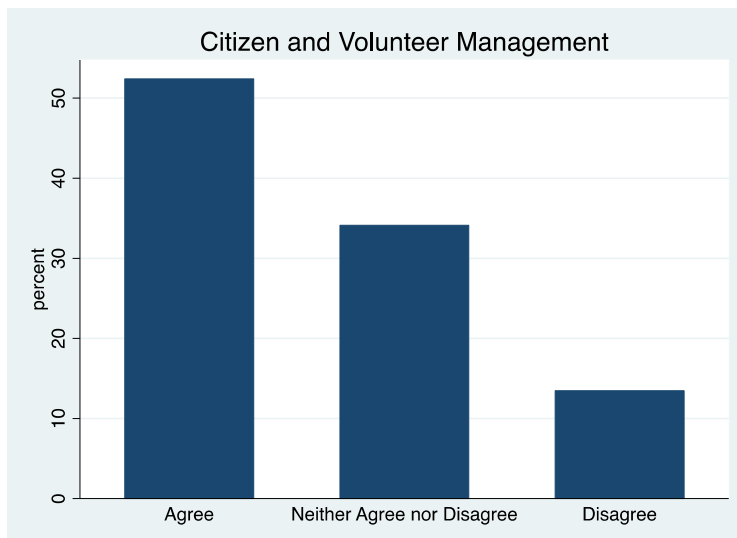
81.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their knowledge of economic/social institutions and processes.



56.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their knowledge of personnel management. This area had one of the lower levels of positive responses within the knowledge section, indicating it may be an area for program growth.

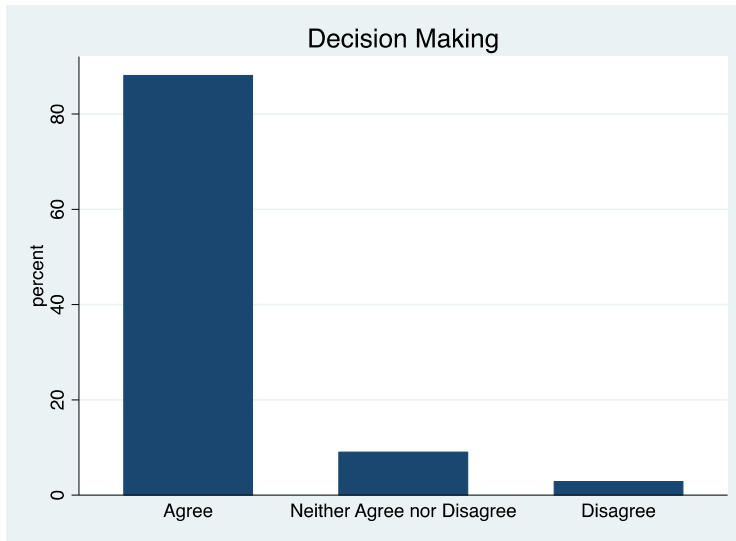


65.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their knowledge of program implementation and evaluation. In the open-ended comments section of the survey, budgeting was frequently mentioned as an area in which the program could be improved.

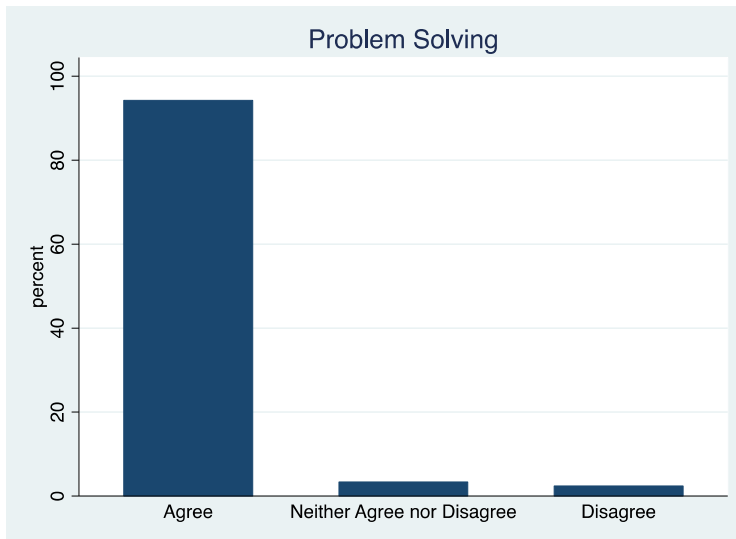


52.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their knowledge of citizen and volunteer management. Of all the knowledge areas surveyed, this area received the least amount of agreement. This area received the lowest amount of positive responses within the knowledge section, although it still had a majority of respondents agreeing that they gained this knowledge.

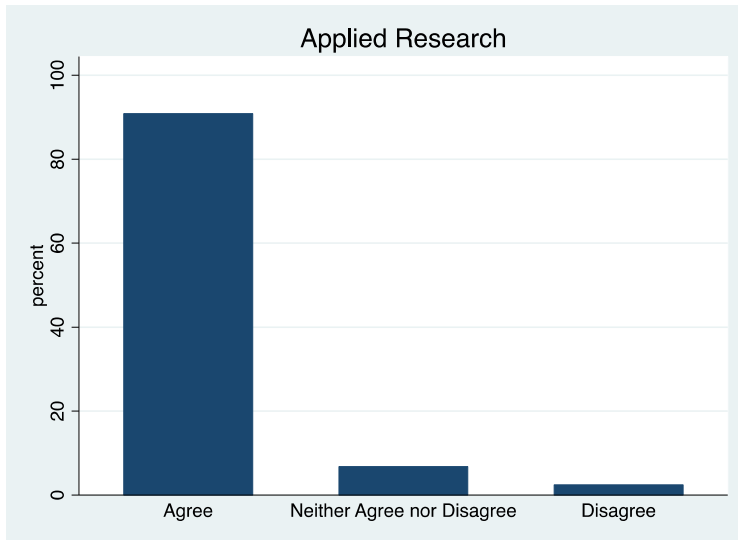
Q8.2 - The MPSA Program contributed to my SKILLS in the following areas:



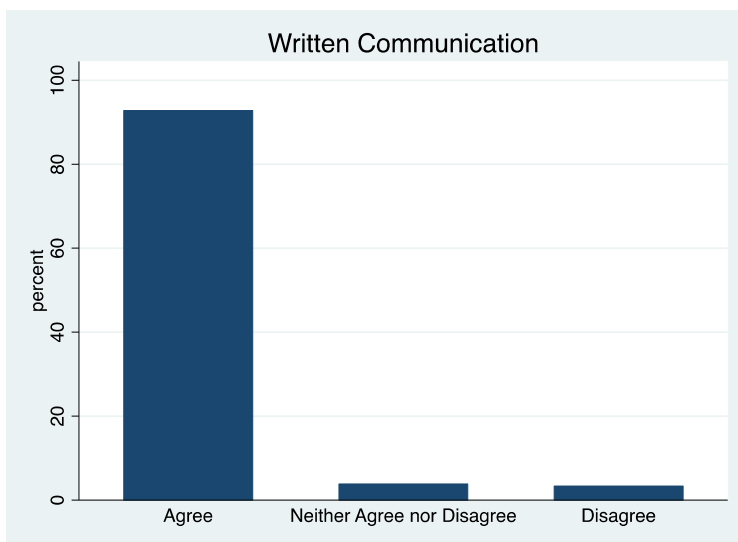
88.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their decision-making skills. Of the ten skills that were in the survey, six, including decision-making, received over 85% agreement.



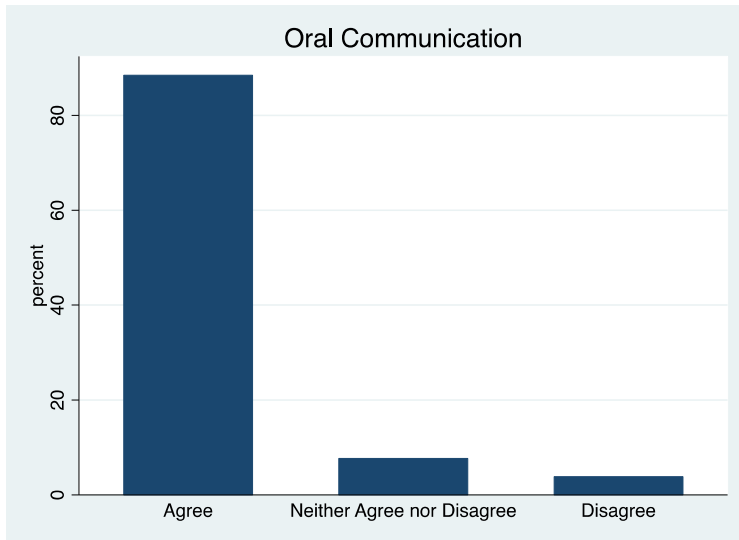
94.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their problem solving skills. This received the most positive response of any of the skills surveyed, indicating it is a program strength.



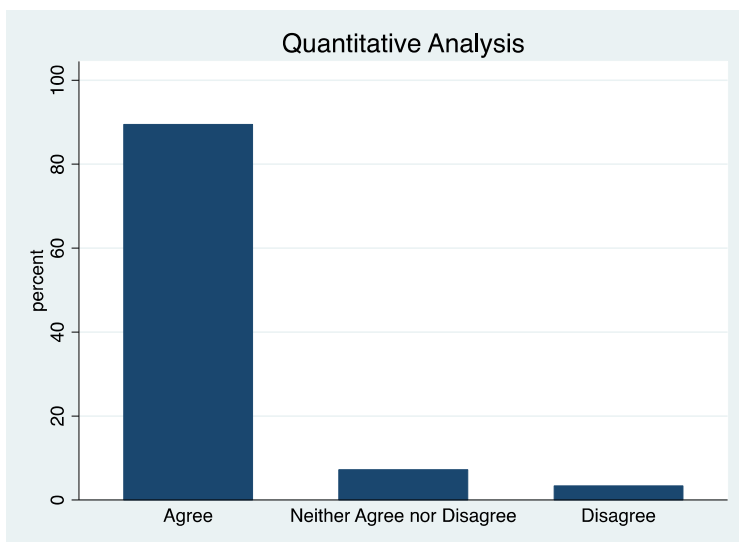
90.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their applied research skills.



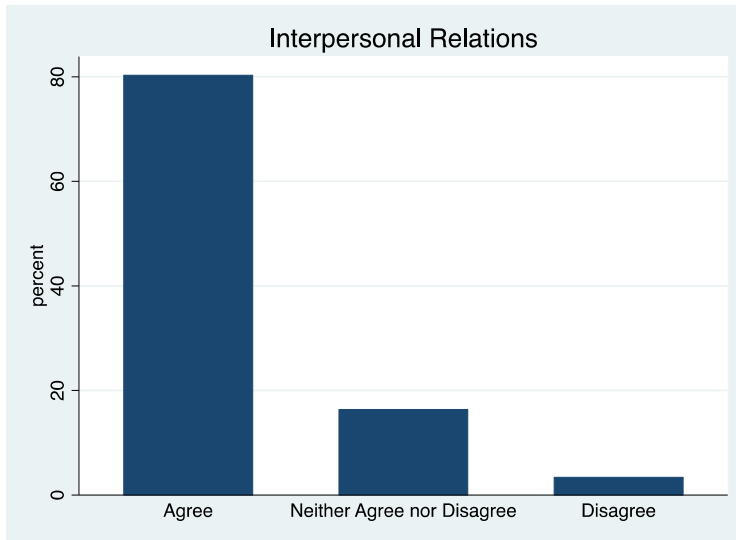
92.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their written communication skills. Given the importance of writing in a number of career fields, this represents a strongly positive result.



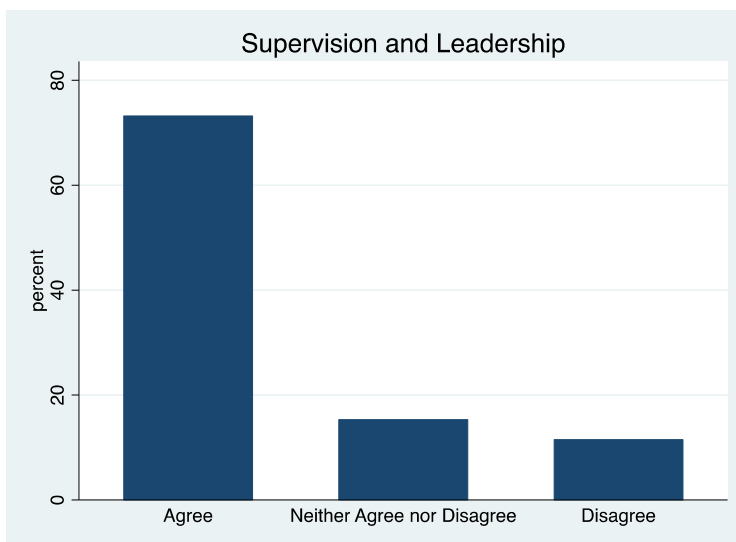
88.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their oral communication skills.



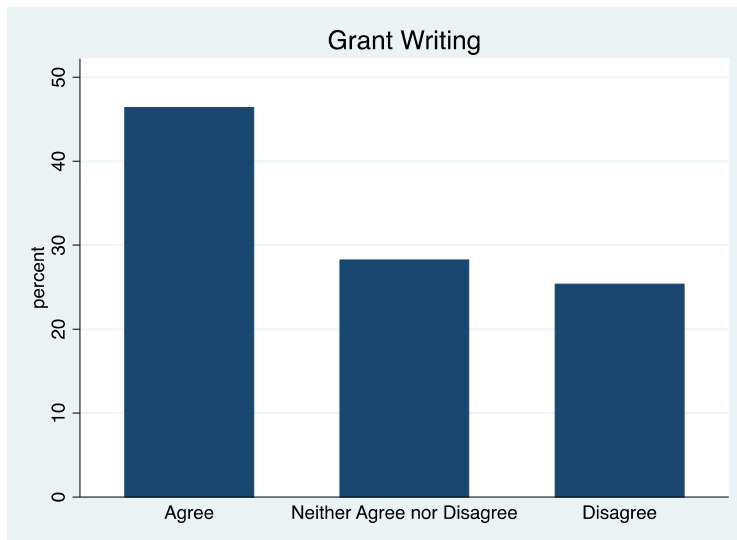
89.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their quantitative analysis skills.



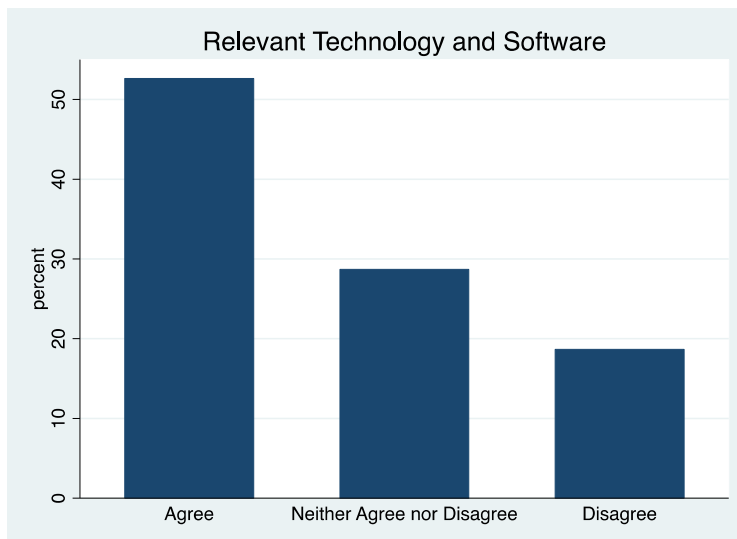
80.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their decision-making skills.



73.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their supervision and leadership skills. While this is still a strongly positive result, this is less than most other skills surveyed, indicating it is a possible area for improvement.



46.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their grant writing skills. This question received the lowest level of agreement of any of the knowledge or skills surveyed and was the only one under 50%. This may indicate that it is an area for improvement, but it also may indicate it is a skill that many students did not choose to focus on during their time in the MPSA program.



52.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program contributed to their relevant technology and software skills. This skill received the second lowest level of agreement, although over half of respondents still had a positive response. This may indicate it is a potential avenue for further program improvement.

Comments regarding knowledge, skills, and preparation:

"I know the school is for public service but not everyone will go into that so I would make the school more inclusive of private enterprise ambitions as well." – 2012 MPSA Graduate

"Team building and personnel management Grant writing Technological problem solving in public administration and public policy analysis Use of media and media exposure Industrial design and innovation to create public infrastructure and make efficient use of federal budgets Skills to detect lies and persuade public and set agendas Skills to classify and to manage confidential for-your-eyes-only type of information Skills to deal with insurgency Survival skills and skills to communicate using different technological capacities under risk scenarios" – 2007 MPSA Graduate

"Writing skills for working in government, which is very different from academic writing Advanced Excel- the program focused on stata only (which is expensive for many nonprofits and government offices)" – 2014 MPSA Graduate

"Technology related areas and more on contracting and HR. Budgeting with Dr. Graham was a good intro but more financial and HR course options would be helpful for those that go in that direction in public service jobs. Plus these skills help you be a better manger and make stronger staffing and management decisions for your agency. Also, while I am now more closely involved with technology since I work for a consulting firm and didn't expect my MPSA degree to prepare me for that...I do think exposure to technology and data science and analytics programs other than STATA is key for those that will be involved in policy analysis in government." – 2011 MPSA Graduate

"Budgeting and financial analysis. I recently was reviewing an agency's financial reports and found my knowledge and skills were not nearly up to standard for the task. The budgeting course I did at the Bush School was great as an introductory course but should have been the first of many. Personnel management is another area I feel the Bush School did not adequately prepare me for - and it was one of the reasons I sought a masters degree in the first place, so I was particularly attuned to opportunities for developing those skills." – 2013 MPSA Graduate

V. Lessons Learned

The use of alumni feedback is vital to the continual improvement of the Bush School MPSA program. This survey covered Bush School curriculum, the internship program, knowledge and skills obtained and honed at the Bush School as well as performance of faculty and staff.

While responses were overwhelmingly positive, there are areas of interest we can take away from this survey in evaluating the MPSA program.

- **Demographics-** A larger share of respondents identified as a race other than white than in the previous alumni survey, showing a growth in diversity of the student population.
- **Curriculum-** While there was high overall satisfaction with the MPSA curriculum, many respondents suggested an improvement in the amount of exposure to practice in the classroom. This was reflected in their response to question 3.2 and frequently echoed in

the additional comments section. Some noted that theory was general and applicable across sectors, indicating that despite a desire for more practical experience, theory is an important part of the curriculum.

- **Faculty-** There was high satisfaction with the faculty, but many suggestions to allow students to choose their faculty advisors as well as a stressed importance on the balance of the mix of practitioners and academics on faculty. Given that students have the option to switch faculty members, this indicates a lack of communication with students about their academic counseling options.
- **Program Services and Activities-** Most results for career services were positive, though many alumni emphasized a need for more help in finding internships their first year, as well as finding jobs their second year. It appears that overall career services is improving, per alumni opinion. Approval of Bush School staff seems to rise and fall across graduating years, while approval of the Bush School facilities has fallen more consistently.
- **Knowledge and Skills-** Alumni most strongly agreed that they had attained the skills of written communication, problem solving and applied research while they least agreed on grant writing and relevant technology and software skills. This suggests that improvements could be done on grant writing and technology and software skills, and that there are areas such as applied research skills, problem solving, and written communication for which alumni mostly agreed or strongly agreed in being satisfied with the skills acquired at the Bush School.

VI. Appendix

Below is the survey sent to alumni.

Q1.1 Did you graduate from the Bush School of Government and Public Service with a Master of Public Service Administration (MPSA) degree?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q1.2 What is your age?

Q1.3 What is your sex?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q1.4 What is your race/ethnicity?

- African American (1)
- American Indian (2)
- Asian (3)
- White Non-Hispanic (4)
- Hispanic (5)
- Other (6) _____

Q1.5 Were you an international student at the Bush School?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q1.6 What year did you graduate with your MPSA degrees?

Q1.7 Did you participate in the five-year dual degree program while at the Bush School?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q1.8 What was your track while you were in the MPSA program?

- Public Policy Analysis (1)
- Public Management (2)
- Nonprofit Management (3)
- Advanced Public Management (4)
- Business and Government (5)
- Environmental and Natural Resources (6)
- Health Policy and Management (7)
- International Affairs in the Americas (8)
- Other (9) _____
- Not Applicable (10)

Q1.9 What was your concentration while you were in the MPSA program?

- Nonprofit Management (1)
- State and Local Policy and Management (2)
- Energy, Environment, and Technology Policy and Management (3)
- Security Policy and Management (4)
- Health Policy and Management (5)
- Analytical Methods (6)
- Education Policy and Management (7)
- International Nongovernmental Organizations (8)
- Self-Designed (9)
- Other (10) _____
- Not applicable (11)

Q1.10 In which state did you complete your undergraduate degree?

Q1.11 What was your undergraduate major?

- Political Science/Government (1)
- Psychology (2)
- Economics (3)
- History` (4)
- Sociology (5)
- Criminal Justice (6)
- Other (7) _____

Q1.12 What state do you currently reside in?

Q2.1 What is your current employment status?

- Full-time (1)
- Part-time (2)
- Unemployed (3)
- Full-time student (4)
- Part-time student (5)
- Retired/Homemaker/Not in the Labor Force (6)

Condition: Unemployed Is Selected. Skip To: End of Block. Condition: Retired/Homemaker/Not in th... Is Selected. Skip To: End of Block.

Q2.2 Are you in a position that relates to your MPSA degree?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Unsure (3)

Q2.3 Please select the appropriate sector of your current employment

- Federal Government (1)
- State Government (2)
- Local Government (3)
- Nonprofit Agency (4)
- Private Business (5)
- Self-Employed (6)
- Contract Work (7)
- Other (8) _____

Display This Question:

If Please select the appropriate sector of your current employment Contract Work Is Selected

Q2.4 Which type of organization do you contract with?

- Nonprofit (1)
- Federal Government (2)
- State Government (3)
- Local Government (4)
- Private Industry (5)

Q2.5 Which of the following best describes your current industry?

- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (1)
- Mining, Quarrying and Oil & Gas Extraction (2)
- Utilities (3)
- Construction (4)
- Manufacturing (5)
- Wholesale Trade (6)
- Retail Trade (7)
- Transportation and Warehousing (8)
- Information (9)
- Finance and Insurance (10)
- Real Estate and Rental & Leasing (11)
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (12)
- Management of Companies and Enterprises (13)
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (14)
- Educational Services (15)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (16)
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (17)
- Accommodation and Food Services (18)
- Other Services (Other than Public Administration) (19)
- Public Administration (20)
- Active Duty Military (21)

Display This Question:

If Which of the following best describes your current industry? Public Administration Is Selected

Q2.6 Which sub-sector of Public Administration best describes your current employment?

- Executive Offices and Legislative Bodies (1)
- Public Finance Activities (2)
- Other General Government and Support (3)
- Justice, Public Order and Safety Activities (4)
- Administration of Human Resource Programs (5)
- Administration of Environmental Quality and Housing Programs (6)
- Administration of Economic Programs and Space Research (7)
- National Security and International Affairs (8)

Q2.7 How many years have you been working for your current employer?

Q2.8 What is your job title?

Q2.9 Please select the salary range for your present job:

- Less than \$10,000 (1)
- \$10,000 - \$19,999 (2)
- \$20,000 - \$29,999 (3)
- \$30,000 - \$39,999 (4)
- \$40,000 - \$49,999 (5)
- \$50,000 - \$59,999 (6)
- \$60,000 - \$69,999 (7)
- \$70,000 - \$79,999 (8)
- \$80,000 - \$89,999 (9)
- \$90,000 - \$99,999 (10)
- \$100,000 - \$149,999 (11)
- \$150,000 - \$249,999 (12)
- \$250,000 - \$499,999 (13)
- More than \$500,000 (14)

Q3.1 There was an appropriate amount of theory taught in the classroom.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.2 There was an appropriate amount of exposure to practice in the classroom.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.3 The core courses provided multi-dimensional perspectives for a career in public service and administration.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.4 The core courses provided adequate preparation for a career in public service and administration.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.5 The elective courses I took contributed meaningfully to my professional development.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.6 My fellow students brought a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives to the classroom.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.7 The capstone seminars contributed meaningfully to my professional development.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.8 The workload required to complete my MPSA degree was reasonable.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.9 The learning environment was stimulating and challenging.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.10 Overall, I was satisfied with the MPSA program curriculum.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q3.11 Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the MPSA curriculum?

Q4.1 Did you participate in the internship program?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Block.

Q4.2 My first year in the MPSA program prepared me for my internship.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q4.3 My internship complemented my academic learning experience.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q4.4 My internship allowed me to gain practical, "hands-on" work experience.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q4.5 My internship was a valuable addition to my professional education and provided insights (either positive or negative) into the kind of career experiences I wanted after graduation.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q4.6 My internship directly helped me gain employment after graduation.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q4.7 Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the MPSA internship program?

Q5.1 I was satisfied with the quality of instruction in the MPSA program.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q5.2 The instructors brought a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives to the classroom.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q5.3 Faculty members in the MPSA program were accessible and constructive when I sought to interact with them

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q5.4 My faculty adviser counseled me in a meaningful way pertaining to academic matters and my professional preparation at the Bush School.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q5.5 Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the MPSA faculty?

Q6.1 The Bush School's extracurricular activities (Public Service Organization, Student Government Association, Ambassadors, intramurals, etc.) contributed positively to my experience in the MPSA program.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q6.2 The MPSA program's facilities were conducive to my learning.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q6.3 The professional leadership and development activities (Public Service Leadership Program and Writing Center) provided me with useful knowledge, insights, and opportunities to practice valuable skills.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q6.4 Career services (including workshops and meetings with career services staff) at the Bush School provided useful assistance in my efforts to secure my internship and my job following graduation.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q6.5 Workshops, brown bags, and speakers at the Bush School contributed positively to my experience in the MPSA program.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q6.6 Overall, MPSA program staff members were helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q6.7 Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the MPSA program services?

Q7.1 The MPSA curriculum provided me with knowledge, skills, and abilities that I directly apply to my career.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q7.2 The MPSA degree or a master's degree is required for my current position.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q7.3 Overall, I feel the Bush School prepared me well for a career in public service and administration.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q7.4 Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the MPSA's impact on your career outcomes? (Fill in the blank)

Q8.1 The MPSA Program contributed to my KNOWLEDGE in the following areas:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Applying public service principles, values, and ethics (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Program implementation and evaluation (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inter-agency collaboration strategies (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political/legal institutions and processes (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic/social institutions and processes (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personnel management (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Budgeting and financial processes (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizen and volunteer management (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8.2 The MPSA Program contributed to my SKILLS in the following areas:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Decision Making (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem Solving (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Applied Research (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Written Communication (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oral Communication (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quantitative Analysis (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interpersonal Relations (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervision and Leadership (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grant Writing (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relevant Technology & Software (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9.1 What skills or knowledge areas have you needed in your career but do not feel that the MPSA program adequately prepared you for?

Q9.2 Looking back on your MPSA experience, which components were most beneficial to you (i.e., courses, brown bag presentations, office space, laptops, program services, extracurricular activities, etc.)?

Q9.3 Please share any suggestions you have on how the program can better prepare students for work in public service and administration.

Q9.4 Do you have any comments, observations, or suggestions regarding your Capstone experience?

Q9.5 Do you have any final comments or suggestions?